

9/23/2022

Your Honor, my name is Leyla Ekren. Thank you for taking the time to read this. Everything in this letter happened before Alison ever joined ISIS.

When I was 12, I found myself to be a child soldier on the front lines of Hatlah, a small village in Syria that is close to the border of Iraq. It was as if I had blinked and then found myself standing there with a suicide belt strapped to my belly and an AK47 I could barely hold in my hands. I had instructions to kill. It was my normal day, but something felt off...

"How did I get here?" I asked myself.

So, I did a little investigating. I wanted to know more about my mother so that I could know more about myself. I asked my mother about what she was like back "before everything". I asked her about the good times in her childhood. Alison responded by saying that she once tried to drown my uncle [REDACTED], her younger brother, in an iced lake. Alison went on to laugh about this and reminisce about other times she tormented him for fun. I laughed too. I thought that was normal behavior.

But first, let's start at the beginning. My first memory is from when I was about 3 or 4 years old, wherein I was being molested by my mother in a bathroom. After that incident or those incidences, I tried to recreate it with my dolls on myself. I did not enjoy it. I did it to help myself understand what happened to me. Around the same time, I have memories of my mother clocking me on the head with a metal hairbrush for having tangled hair.

On my sixth birthday, my mother broke the news to me that we were going to leave the US and go to Egypt. In Egypt, I would continue my sexual journey of trying to understand what happened to me. I would try to have sex with kids my age every chance that I got, such as on the playground, and in the bathroom. I felt dirty and perverted. I didn't know why I was doing this.

I remember violence. My mother never tortured me in anger. When my mother did torture me, Allison was always bored. If it helped to emulate anger so she could make me cry and scream in fear, then Allison would. But then Alison would go right back to being fine, or most of the time, in a better mood than she started off in.

My mother would beat my body, leaving my muscles cramping in agony. Alison would then go to her room and masturbate over the fact that she beat me. I could hear her from the other room. Sometimes it hurt so much that I couldn't move or cry. It was like I was frozen in time, for the purpose of feeling my body pulse with pain. I would often have bruises on my face of her fingers from being slapped so hard.

I remember being hungry. My brother Gabe killed a stray dog for us kids to eat so that we wouldn't starve from my mother's neglect. My mother once was trying to kill my brother Gabe for some reason, and he escaped death by jumping off our second story balcony. This happened in front of me.

But it's not *all* doom and gloom.

My mother bought me a bunny once. Although Alison wouldn't buy any supplies to care for the bunny. One supply she refused to buy was litter. So, one day she told me that If I didn't magically make Mr. Bunny stop defecating around the house, she would give him to the neighbors. In Egypt, rabbits are seen as a delicacy. I didn't put two and two together. I was fine with the fact that the bunny was with our neighbors since the bunny was close by. One day I went to go say "hi" to the bunny. The neighbor came back from the butchers with a bag in his hand.

I asked him where the bunny was, and he said, "it's in the bag." I thought to myself "silly guy, why would you put a live bunny in a plastic bag?" I asked him if I could pet the bunny, and he gave me a weird look, saying "sure". I slid my hand in the bag only to be greeted by the dead flesh of my pet. He then offered me to come eat dinner with them without knowing the context of his invitation.

My mother did this just for kicks. Some people watch a game of football for entertainment, and some people kill their child's pet for pleasure. To each their own, I guess. Another time, my mother got bored in Egypt and she bought a slave. She was about 25, and her name was [REDACTED]. My mother then abandoned [REDACTED] to fend for herself in the streets of Egypt. She did this because she decided she was going to flee Egypt to pursue a career in terrorism.

Onto Libya we would go. My mother started brainwashing me as soon as we got there. We were watching a TV show called "24". The episode was called "Day 8: 2:00 a.m.-3:00 a.m.". In it, the main character whose name was "Jack Bauer" was trying to save people from a suicide bomber. Allison then turned to me and asked me, who was the "good guy" in this situation? I

responded by saying "Jack Bauer". She told me that I was wrong and that the good guy was, in fact, the suicide bomber.

Allison's first attempt at starting a battalion would be in 2011. She had a small group of children, ages ranging from 6-9. She would tell us that if we didn't kill the "kufar" that we would be raped. She then would show us videos of Iraqi women getting raped by American soldiers. She would make us do exercises in the name of being fit enough to kill.

Allison had other hobbies, including encouraging Volcan, my father, to build a silencer so that he could kill whomever with it. She would stay up late, helping him and motivating him to finish the project. Allison would then talk about how she wanted to murder people with it. On a separate occasion, I was venturing off into the woods and came across a metal barrel used for water storage that was 3x the size of my body. It only had one opening on the top. As a curious child, I got a ladder and climbed to the top of the barrel. As I got to the opening, I almost fell in it. If I did, then there would have been no way out for me. We were in the Libyan countryside, so if I were to scream for help, no one would hear me. To add to the horror of what would have happened to me, it was summer, and this metal tin can was directly under the sun. Essentially, I would have cooked alive at 9 years old. I immediately ran home to tell my mother of what had just happened to me, and the first thing that she said was, "you know, that would be a great tool to use on someone. I could just leave them to die in there." She then went on ranting and laughing about how exciting it would be to dig a hole in the ground, stick the barrel in the ground, and leave someone in it to die. She then switched to the idea of using the silencer on people, and then filling the barrel up with the bodies.

Later, during the 1 year we spent in Libya my mother heard of a woman named "[REDACTED]" aka. "[REDACTED]" who wanted to go to Syria to do a suicide bombing. Volcan thought that this

woman was crazy, but my mother was intrigued. My mother befriended the woman and supported her desires to leave Libya to commit the bombing. [REDACTED] called Allison from Syria and said that she wouldn't do the bombing since she had just found out that she was pregnant. Allison told [REDACTED] to not worry and that Allison would join her in Syria and adopt [REDACTED]'s son so that [REDACTED] could go through with the suicide bombing plan. At this point, Volcan was done with my mother's unusual hobbies. He told her that he wanted to settle down and keep living on the farm that we were on at the time. He told her that he had a passion for owning his own business as a shoe salesman in Libya. He told her that he was tired of this lifestyle. She responded to this by saying that he was a "pussy". She attacked his masculinity for not wanting to go to Syria and do Jihad. Allison said the terrorist group called "Ansar Al-Sharia" that she and Volcan were affiliated with at the time had died down, and that there wasn't enough fun for her in Libya anymore. Volcan, being the weak man that he was, succumbed to her orders and took us to Syria. There, she would join another terrorist group called "Jabhatil Nusra".

In Syria my mother tried starting another battalion. We were stationed in a Jabhatil Nusra base called "Maqar Al Shams". It was an abandoned factory on the outskirts of the city of Aleppo and was used for weapon storage as well as a place for the fighters' families to stay. Allison couldn't stand another minute of not being a bastard. Allison started training me on how to use an AK47, shotgun, M16, suicide belt, and grenades (both offensive and defensive). In Libya I was taught that I was going to be killed if I didn't obey my mother, and now I was being taught to kill for my mother. Allison got all the kids from the base together and started teaching them basic English, like the alphabet. The kids' parents were not on board with the battalion idea. Allison wanted to ease them into the battalion plan by teaching the kids harmless things

first. While she was doing this, Allison was trying to get the mothers of the kids to help her turn the main area of the factory section into a training ground for the girls. My mother said she wanted the training for the girls to be just like the propaganda videos Jabhatil Nusra was making the men do. She was having great difficulty making this happen. Nobody was fully on board.

Allison then left the Jabhatil Nusra base and reunited with [REDACTED] at which time Allison would encourage [REDACTED] to continue her journey of suicide bombing after she gave birth. During this same time, my mother would continue training me to be a child soldier. Allison talked about how she wanted to torture me in the name of making me strong for the cause. My mother talked about how she wanted to waterboard me and leave me out for a couple of days for me to suffer. I was 10 at the time.

While she was training me, I got ill with typhoid fever. I was dying. Everything hurt. As the disease started eating away at me, I couldn't get up or move. I couldn't eat or drink. My ribs showed through my skin like a ladder. My stomach was sunken in like a bowl. My mother would still try to train me, but it got so bad that I couldn't obey her anymore. As I got closer and closer to death, my mind started to deteriorate. I couldn't hold onto a thought. I would lie down, eyes open and mind empty. It felt as though my sole purpose in life was to feel like shit. I was 10, and I yearned for death. My nose would bleed all the time. I would have random seizures as my body started to collapse. My mother did nothing.

At some point after that, Allison realized she needed money for funding the battalion, so she convinced Volcan to take us back to Turkey. She used me and my illness as an excuse to go back to Turkey. My mother knew Volcan had a soft spot for me, so she used that to her advantage by emphasizing that I could get proper care in Turkey. Allison got what she wanted again. Off to Turkey we go. I had to illegally cross the Turkish border. I had to walk miles

through fields of land mines. I started having multiple seizures and just had to push through it. I had to hide from the Turkish military in tall grass while I was convulsing and keep quiet. After we made it across the Turkish border, I was taken to a doctor. I was diagnosed with typhoid fever and the doctors said that they were surprised that I was still alive. After this, I started my recovery process from the illness. This alone was very difficult. I couldn't eat in the beginning of my recovery, and I had to train my body to accept food again. I had to regain all the weight that I had lost. It took 4-5 years for me to fully recover. About 7 months after we got to Turkey my mother made me cross the border again, and again and again. We crossed the border more times than I can count while I was sick with or still recovering from typhoid fever. One of the times she took me back and forth, she abandoned me in Syria to go back to Turkey on her own. I was still sick. She left me in the winter, in a house with no heat and no food, for about two weeks. I had no fat on my body to keep me warm. I relied on the warmth of my skin and bones to keep me alive. She came back and I had left the house for the first time since my mother had left me there because a local Syrian civilian invited me to her house to feed me. The first thing my mother said to me when she got back was, "You weren't supposed to leave the house!" Allison then went on to verbally insult my character for disobeying her holy orders. My mother then took me back to Turkey. I had to drag my weak frail body across the border yet again during winter. Again, I hide in the grass as the winter air carved into my face, crossed streams of ice water, and got my clothes caught in barbed wire. Why go to therapy when you can just toss your daughter around like a rag doll? We get to Turkey again. While we were there, she would get money from [REDACTED], "[REDACTED]" who supported Allison financially. My mother also tried to convince my older brother Gabriel to join her cause. Allison said that if Gabriel came to Turkey and didn't want to help her in making a battalion, she would kill him. While we were in

Turkey, my mother dropped her prayers and did many other things that weren't allowed in the religion of Islam. She was only religious to fit in with the crowd. Allison's belief in Allah is an act. She simply gets off when people hurt. One day while we were in Turkey, my mother came back to our house and said that we needed to get out of Turkey and go back to Syria immediately. I asked her why, and Allison said that she was interrogated by Americans at the American embassy about Volcan. My mother said that she fooled them into thinking she was innocent, and that she blamed Volcan for everything. My mother said she started to cry during the interrogation, and that she made herself out to be a damsel in distress to the Americans. She laughed in joy to the thought of getting away with everything she had done. My mother uses fake crying to manipulate others all the time, exactly the way that she used anger on me to make me afraid. She uses emotions to manipulate others into feeling what she wants them to feel. I know it's an act because all my life I have seen my mother portray sadness and intense emotions, but then as soon as she gets what she wants out of people and they leave, she switches right back into whatever she is truly feeling. I have never seen my mother genuinely cry in my life.

Since the age of 12, the first time my mother sent me to fight on the front lines, I have had burning questions about how I got to be as unfortunate as I was. I knew the answer laid within my mother, but I did not know how. Now I do. Your Honor, I want you to understand what kind of person my mother is. Pre ISIS, Alison has attempted murder on multiple occasions, tried to start a battalion on multiple occasions, has owned a slave, and has emotionally, physically, and sexually abused me. Allison is a sadist through and through. She is happy when you are sad. She took pleasure in pain. She couldn't help her desires and needed to escalate the pain she

caused every time. That's how a Kansas girl who had non-abusive parents and a normal American childhood can end up as an ISIS battalion leader

Ever since 2011 Alison wanted to be in a position of power where she trains any age to be violent and commit acts of terrorism; this is what I mean when I use the term battalion. She told me back in 2011 that she wanted to do something like 9/11 and be the next Osama Bin Ladin. Alison wasn't discreet about her admiration for bin Ladin hence why she [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Alison's main strategies in leading people to commit acts of violence had three steps.

Step number one was to join a group such as Ansar Al-Sharia, Jabhatil Nusra, and ISIS and ask for military funding. If they denied her then she would move on to step two, disguising her malicious intents as good deeds such as wanting to start a school and or teach people self-defense. Once Alison got her claws sunken into people, she would then start to pervert her once innocent intentions and introduce ideologies like the only way to self-defense is to attack first. Alison's teachings included ideas of suicide bombing yourself so that you don't get raped in the name of self-defense. This narrative would especially work on vulnerable, naïve little girls which is why Alison preferred training girls as young as 6 years old. Allison specifically wanted to train little girls because she could groom them into having a fear that she could use to control them, just like she did to me.

Just for clarification purposes, note Volcans supporting role in all these stories. My mother would control Volcan by convincing him to break his morals in a small way, and then do so again but continue escalating the level of immorality each time. If Volcan didn't want

to do something my mother was ordering him to do, she would remind him of the previous times he had already broken his morals for her. This places Volcan in a position where he would either have to face the fact that he was a bad person for listening to her in the past, or simply listen to her again without thinking about the implications. My mother controlled Volcan, not the other way around. Volcan actively disapproved of what Alison would do in terms of starting a battalion and would often get in the way. This is why the most successful attempt of Alison's battalion, Katiba Nusaybah, was after Volcan had died.

Like I said, everything I mention in this letter happened before Alison joined ISIS. Your Honor, I would like to speak in court because I have more to say on the abuse and victimization Alison did to me while in ISIS. I want to give you a dynamic look at who Alison is. Your Honor, as Alison's unloving daughter, I would also like to request that you give Alison the maximum sentence.

My childhood is filled with memories of being cold, hungry, and dirty. I would get so hungry that I would chew on wood and eat grass to sooth the pain. I would find maggots in the crevices of my body, such as my belly button, from the filth I was left in. I would constantly have glass in my foot from my mother intentionally breaking it so that I would step on it. Accidentally drinking from a glass of bleach was a regular thing due to my mother intentionally leaving bleach in drinking glasses for me to find. My mother would find weaknesses in each of her kids and exploit them. Sometimes, Allison would even groom me into having weaknesses that she could use. My mother taught me to fear rape, and then she would molest me. Any time that I would disobey, Allison would break into hysteria, tears gushing from her eyes. My mother knew that I had a weakness for crying, and she used that against me. My blood runs cold and hot

at the same time while I write this letter. I can visibly see my hands turning blue. My eyes tear up as I reexperience every detail I write about. Memories that aren't mentioned in this letter come rushing back to me. I can see it all right now. All the pain that she caused me and other children. I can't stand the mention of my given name because my siblings would scream and cry it out while they were hungry, or being beaten, or being molested. I see their facial muscles pinch up and malform as they hurt. It's burned into my brain.

How has this affected me? I had to catch up on all the years I wasn't in school. I was illiterate, and ignorant as hell. My mother had convinced me that I was mentally handicapped, and that it was my fault that I didn't know what other kids knew at my age. I had to unlearn this idea that I am not smart, and I am still unlearning this. I had to undo all the brainwashing my mother did to me while trying to catch up on the education she never gave me. I was diagnosed with CPTSD from my therapist. I want to die every day. In ending I'll leave you with this, to put in perspective how terrible my mother is: I was treated the best out of all my other siblings.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The name 'Debra Eken' is written in a cursive, flowing style. The 'D' is large and loops around the 'e' in 'Debra'. The 'E' is also large and loops around the 'k' in 'Eken'. The signature is written on a plain white background.